



United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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Instruction Memorandum No. CA-2012-012
Expires: 9/30/12

To: All District and Field Managers
Attn: District and Field Office FMO's

From: State Director

Subject: California BLM Policy for Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) Units

DD: 6/1/2012

Purpose:

This Instruction Memorandum (IM) updates and replaces the policy for Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) use as originally directed in *Instruction Memorandum No. CA-2008-026*.

Background:

Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) units are used in some California wildland fire organizations. Their use provides additional protection to firefighters responding to fires threatening public lands that may have originated from vehicle fires, dump fires or structure fires. Increased occurrence of these types of fires has elevated the potential exposure to toxic smoke and gases at wildland fire incidents. It is BLM California's policy that personnel not be exposed to a hazardous atmosphere without protection provided by SCBA's.

Standards for SCBA use are found in the December 3, 2011, BLM California SCBA Standard Operating Procedures Guide. The BLM California SCBA Standard Operating Procedures and Training Course Guides are available from Field Office Fire Management Staff and at Fire Stations. District/Field Offices must meet the standards for medical requirements, equipment, training and clothing as established in the BLM California SCBA Standard Operating Procedures Guide.

The California BLM Fire and Aviation Management Program has taken steps to provide protection to the firefighter by supplying positive pressure SCBA units for all Type 3 engines (class 665) within California. These SCBA units are the only approved units, and are required to

be installed on all Type 3 engines.

The BLM emphasis in using SCBA units on structure fires will continue to be to preserve life and protect property. Our policy of NOT entering structures for suppression efforts remains the same. We will continue to provide structure defense from the exterior only, in order to protect the wildland from a structure fire, or a structure(s) from a wildland fire.

Use of SCBA units on fires will be according to the BLM California SCBA Standard Operating Procedures Guide. The SCBA units must be worn throughout the extinguishment and mop-up phases of these incidents. To offer maximum safety to the firefighter during these types of fires, foam will be utilized at all times during extinguishment and mop-up. As a reminder, supervisors are responsible for grooming standards per sub-section 5 of the "Use of Respiratory Equipment" section. All engineering and management controls should be exercised prior to the use of SCBA's.

Our objective for providing the SCBA's is not to provide a new way for our firefighters to fight fires, but to provide protection from what they are already exposed to. All tactical procedures, methodology and a risk assessment should be considered before using SCBA equipment. Once the decision to utilize the SCBA equipment has been made, actions initiated should be based on the crew's level of training, capability and safety equipment.

Policy/Action

Effective immediately, in order to comply with the statewide policy for the use of SCBA's, District Managers are required to submit a "notification of policy compliance" memo to the State Director by June 1 annually. This letter will confirm compliance with all the implementation procedures of the SCBA program for each office within the District. This is a statewide program policy, therefore; all District/Field Offices must be compliant before SCBA's are placed on engines within the state.

If you have any questions or need additional copies of the guide and training manual, please contact Sam Marouk - Deputy State Fire Management Officer for Operations, at 916-978-4437.

Signed by:
Angie Lara
Associate State Director

Authenticated by:
Richard A. Erickson
Records Management